From: Karen DeMaria <kwtreelady@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, June 15, 2026 2:18 PM
To: Donna Phillips <donna.phillips@cityofkeywest-fl.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Fwd: Tree Commission 6-16-26

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Please post this email below to the public comments on the Tree Commission agenda (6-16-26) and to the two agenda items.

Thank you,

Sincerely,

Karen

---------- Forwarded message ---------
From: **Karen DeMaria** <kwtreelady@gmail.com>
Date: Mon, Jun 15, 2026 at 1:57 PM
Subject: Tree Commission 6-16-26
To: Zachary Bentley <zachary.bentley@cityofkeywest-fl.gov>, Brett Mayle <Brett.Mayle@cityofkeywest-fl.gov>
Cc: <patrick.wright@cityofkeywest-fl.gov>

When I was the Urban Forestry Manager, it was required by previous city manager's and the legal department, that all applications from the CIty to a board or permit department be properly signed with all the required documentation to create a complete file, just like any application from the general public, in order to be processed. Sec 110-323 of the City Tree Ordinance states that in order for an application to be acted upon, it must be signed by the property owner, or a notarized letter from the property owner designating an authorized agent. For the City, proper procedure was that all applications must be signed

by the City manager or assistant City Manager and they would not sign off on an application unless documentation was attached to the application as to why the application needed to be processed.

In government, boards and commissions make decisions, as per city code/land development regulations and those representatives are an extension of the sitting City Commissioners and Mayors and are to be treated with respect. Staff's job is to pull together the file and present it for the commission/board to make an informed decision. With the Tree Commission, the presented file should include a complete application with property owner's signature, representative information (if needed), name of the tree/s to be impacted, why the requested work needs to be done, and a location map drawn in the provided box on the application or attached on a seperate paper. The file should include a property card verifying ownership, and any information regarding previous work to the tree involved in the application (was it a transplant, has it been previously trimmed, was a removal permit issued in the past?). The location map is important so that the Tree Commissioners or the general public can visit the tree and/or the area. The staff representative also does a site inspection to document the condition of the tree, verify any potential issues, as stated in the application, if they exist, take measurements to determine potential mitigation, and write the report so that the commissioners and the general public can clearly understand the what and whys. Are there any alternatives available? Remember, as per city code, all trees in the city are of public interest and it is important that the documentation is in the file presented at the meeting in case there is an appeal.

So I looked at the files for the next Tree Commission meeting because of some recent comments I received from people regarding the City urban forestry department, and the following addresses caught my attention: 308 Front and the Grinnell Street-Ferry Terminal.

308 Grinnell: First of all, the application is incomplete and should never have been placed on the agenda as the application is not signed by the City Manager who is the property owner. That needs to be commented on and a requirement of the removal approval as this is a legal requirement and the code!!! Also, who is requesting the removal and why should the tree be removed--are there alternatives (did the assistant urban forestry manager drive by and notice it was a bad tree, did the adjacent property owner contact the City, did HTA from across the street have a concern and say something to the City?) The application has no information on it not even a map showing its location in the block and there is no

historical information regarding what has been done previously to this tree. I know that the City crews heavily trimmed this tree several times trying to protect it and provide safety. We also had an issue for years with the previous property owners who didn't want the tree touched on their side and prevented access to the tree canopy. I think the address before might have been 310 or 312 Front. If someone in the office had looked in the planning GEO file or the tree commission excel database they might have found this information. All this information is in folders on the city computers. Historical information is important when dealing with a historically significant tree such as this one.

Grinnell Street-Ferry Terminal: again, there is historical information in the files regarding this project and the trees. The urban forestry department has mapped this area numerous times the past 2-3 years and that information is in the Tree Commission computer files along with photos. There was also a previous development plan approval years ago that approved removal of some of those same trees. All easy information that should be included in the file presented to the Tree Commission at the public meeting.

Sincerely,

Karen

Karen DeMaria

Environmental Consultant/Certified Arborist